

11.

THE
CHRISTIAN'S
DAILY
DEVOTION;
WITH
DIRECTIONS
HOW
To Walk with GOD all the
Day long.

BEING
A Continuation of the PASTORAL
LETTER *from a Minister to his
Parishioners.*

By the Author of the PASTORAL
LETTER.

L O N D O N:

Printed for B. DOD, Bookseller to THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN
KNOWLEDGE; at the *Bible and Key* in *Ave-
Mary Lane*, near *Stationers-Hall*.

M.DCC.XLVII.

[Pr. 1 d.]

18

Most dearly beloved
Neighbours ;

HAVING already presented you with the *Pastoral Letter*, wherein I endeavoured to lay before you such Considerations as might, with the Blessing of God, make you sensible of the inestimable Value of your immortal Souls and at the same Time convince you of the absolute Necessity you lie under, of taking Care for their everlasting Welfare : I thought it farther requisite to furnish you with some few plain Directions for your daily walking with God in the Way of Holiness and Righteousness, which only leads to eternal Life. And may it please the God of all Grace to give a Blessing to these my weak Endeavours, that we may receive the End of our Hopes, even the Salvation of all our Souls, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Saviour.


T H



THE
CHRISTIAN'S
DAILY
DEVOTION;

WITH

Directions how to walk with
God all the Day long.

 Remember, I beseech you, that the Day is usually spent well or ill, according as you prepare yourself in the Beginning of it: If you suffer vain Thoughts to take Possession of your Soul when you awake, you have laid in Fuel for Satan to kindle all the Day after; wherefore, it behoves you at your first waking, to begin with God; to endeavour to possess your Soul with an awful Reverence and Regard to him.

A 2

There-

4 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

Therefore lift up your Hearts to him, in these, or the like pious Ejaculations.

*E*Arly in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto Thee, and will look up, Psal. v. 3.

It is a good Thing to give Thanks unto the Lord, and to sing Praises unto thy Name, O most High! To shew forth thy Loving-kindness in the Morning, and thy Faithfulness every Night, Psal. xcii. 1, 2.

He might appoint wearisome Nights for us; so that when we lie down, we should say, When shall we arise, and the Night be gone? And should be full of tossings to and fro, unto the Dawning of the Day, Job vii. 3, 4.

He might have scared me with Dreams, and terrified me through Visions, Job vii. 14.

But blessed be his holy Name! He hath made my Sleep sweet unto me, Prov. iii. 24.

When you have thus offered your first Thoughts to God, put on your Cloaths; and whilst you are so doing, Meditate upon the general Resurrection at the last Day, when we shall all appear before the great Judge of Quick and Dead: Think of the Mercy you have received in having one Day more granted you, wherein to work out your Salvation. Let this excite your Thankfulness for former Mercies; and accordingly, as soon as you have dressed yourself, make your Acknowledgments unto Almighty God in a most solemn Manner.

M O R N

MORNING PRAYER.

I Thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, for all thy Mercies bestowed upon me from the Time of my Birth to this very Moment: I bless Thee for my Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life; for my Health, Food, Raiment, Friends, and all other Comforts and Conveniencies; for preserving and watching over me the Night past, and for raising me up in Health and Safety this Morning. But above all, I bless Thee for thy wonderful Love in Christ Jesus, for the Means of Grace, and for the Hopes of Glory. Lord! endue me with a thankful Heart, evermore possessed with a wonderful Sense of thy Goodness, and give me Grace to walk worthy of it.

Make me, I beseech Thee, always mindful of that solemn Vow and Promise which I entred into at my Baptism; and give me Grace to resist the Temptations of the Devil, the World, and my own corrupt Nature. Give me a due Sense of all my former Transgressions, and work in my Heart an utter Abhorrence of

6 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

them: Cause me to walk in thy Fear all the Day long: Make me humble, peaceful, contented: Purify my Heart from all vain Thoughts and Desires: Keep my Tongue from evil Speaking, Lying and Slandering; my Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity; and in every respect, let my Conversation be as becometh the Gospel: Let my Faith be unfeigned, my Love to Thee sincere, and give me Grace entirely to love and depend upon thy Goodness in every Thing. Grant me more and more of the Assistance of thy holy Spirit, to work in me both to will and to do according to thy good Pleasure. Make me industrious in my Calling, provident of my Time, obedient to my Superiors, just and loving unto all Men. Preserve me from Sin, from evil Company, and from Danger. Bless the King, and all the Royal Family, with all the rest of our Governors, whether in Church or State. Bless him particularly whom Thou hast appointed to minister unto me in Things pertaining to Salvation; Make his Labours effectual for the Good of my Soul, and me willing to be guided and directed by him. Bless all my Relations,

The Christian's daily Devotion. 7

ther, Mother, Brother, &c. [*as you stand related*] Reward all my Friends and Benefactors, and forgive all my Enemies. These Things, and whatsoever else Thou seest needful, either for my Body or my Soul, be pleased in Mercy to bestow upon me, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who hath taught me thus to Pray, *Our Father, &c.*

WHEN you have in this manner made known your Requests to God, and are thereby entitled to his Blessing, Favour, and Protection the remaining Part of the Day; you may, as your Occasions require, betake yourself to the Works of your Calling. And, I beseech you, resolve not to lose or mispend the Day before you, remembring, that when it is gone, you will see it again no more for ever.

But here I must advise you, as ever you hope to have your Prayers beneficial to you, not to behave yourself as too many do, who no longer remember what they have been praying for, and so lose all the Benefit of their Prayers. You must be sure to call to mind the several Things you have begged of God: at least you must be habitually prepared so to do, whenever the Occurrences of the Day shall give you Occasion to remember them.

For instance: You have returned your Thanks to God for Mercies already received;

8 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

take Care to walk worthy of them, that he may not be provoked to deny his future Favours. You have begged fresh Mercies, wait in an humble Assurance of God's Fatherly Care over you, and believe that if you receive them not, he knows that you are not yet prepared for them. As you have prayed for God's Holy Spirit, keep your Mind pure, your Thoughts holy, your Body chaste and temperate, that you may be a fit Habitation for the Holy Ghost. You desire Strength to resist Temptations, do not give way to them when they come, and be sure not to run into their Embraces. You desire Forgiveness of past Sins, be careful not to add to your former Accounts, by committing new ones. You beg several Graces, labour to exercise them as God shall call you to it. To prevent speaking Evil of your Neighbour, think no Evil of him; and if you hear any, live in Hopes that it is a Mistake, a Calumny. You pray for Chastity, be temperate in your Diet, modest in your Apparel, let your Speech be savoury, avoid the Conversation of loose or vain Persons. If you would love God, reflect much on his Mercies, especially in Jesus Christ. You desired to depend upon God, let this appear in every Instance of his Providence towards you: Be content with the Want of those outward Comforts which he thinks fit to deny you, and do not use any indirect Means in any case to help yourself for that would be to forsake your Maker, and

The Christian's daily Devotion. 9

to consult with the Devil. You pray, that you may be Loving unto all Men; be ready and willing to shew all Acts of Kindness which shall be in your Power. You desired God to forgive your Enemies, do you be sure to offer all reasonable and fitting Terms of Reconciliation, and be willing and desirous to be made Friends again. You pray for your Minister, that God would bless his Labours for your Soul's good; be you willing to be guided and directed by him.

Thus, in these and all other Particulars, which you shall have occasion to beg of God, labour to make your Prayers effectual, by ordering your Lives and Conversations according to your Petitions and Wants; and then doubt not in the least, but God will in a most gracious Manner hear and answer you, as he knows to be most convenient and suitable to your Condition, and especially to your better and more lasting Interest, that of your Soul, which will never be left unsupplied with such a Measure of the Graces of his Holy Spirit, as you are from time to time fitted to receive.

And now, that I may farther direct you in the well ordering of your Life every Day, I beseech you,

1st, *To resolve every Day to make it your endeavour to live in the Fear of God, and to obey Him, whatever others do.* You must expect to meet with many Temptations from wicked Men, from your own Lusts, and

10 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

from Satan; but you must consider, that these are the very Enemies you have renounced in your Baptism, and that if you do not abhor and forsake them, you will be false to the Covenant of your God, and be found fighting against Him: You then listed yourself under Christ's Banner, and engaged to fight his Battles, in opposition to the Kingdom of Darkness; and therefore, if you give up yourself to do Wickedly, you take Part with the Enemies of God, and wretchedly betray the Interests of your Lord and Master.

Wherefore, when thou art tempted to commit Iniquity, consider with thyself the great Danger thou art in, of losing the Favour of God, and being deprived of the gracious Assistances of his Holy Spirit, without which thou art not able to think or do any Thing that is Good. Consider, that every time thou venturest upon Sin, thou rejectest God, and choolest to lose his Friendship and Grace, and to do Despite unto Him, like the *Jews*, who chose *Barabbas* the Murderer, and rejected Christ their Saviour. Remember that God *hateth all Workers of Iniquity*, *Psal. v. 5. xi. 5.* and He counted them his Enemies. *Rom. viii. 7. Psal. vii. 11. James iv. 4, 6.*

Remember the dreadful and irrevocable Damnation of so many Thousands of Angels created to Glory, and that for one Sin. Remember the dismal Effect of *Adam's* Transgression, not only upon himself, but upon all his Children that should be born after him to the World's End.

The Christian's daily Devotion. 11

Remember the Torments and Death our Saviour suffered to redeem us from Sin. Consider the great Mercies which God hath vouchsafed to thee; that He made thee of nothing, according to the Likeness of himself, and appointed thee for so noble a Purpose, as to serve Him in this Life, and to live and reign with Him in Glory hereafter; and that for the present, He hath made all the Creatures thy Subjects and Servants. That when thou hadst made thyself subject to eternal Punishment, God redeemed thee, and delivered His own Son to Death for thy sake.

That He hath called thee to the State of a Christian, and thereby admitted thee to be a Partaker of all the Means of Grace here, and the comfortable Hopes of Glory hereafter.

That He from time to time supplies thee with the Assistance of his Holy Spirit.

That He alone preserveth thy Life from all Dangers, and thy Soul from all Temptations. That He hath often knocked at the Door of thy Conscience, and all to engage thee to forsake Iniquity, to work out thy Salvation, and to be eternally happy.

Lay these things to Heart, I beseech you, and fear not to be accounted Scrupulous or Precise, by those that would entice or fright you from your bounden Duty; but esteem it rather your Glory to be counted a Fool for Christ, and rejoice that you are thought worthy to suffer for his Name. Heaven is worth all the Pains of getting thither.

Howso-

12 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

Howsoever the Generality of the World may make little Account of offending God; though the Sinner may be praised in his Lusts, and wicked Men exalted; yet most certain it is, and the Holy Spirit of God affirmeth it, *1 John iii. 8. He that committeth Sin is of the Devil, and therefore shall receive his Portion among Devils at the latter Day. The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the People that forget God.*

And if you seriously consider these Things, as you will avoid Sin, so will you,

2dly, Arm yourself against evil Company, that great Snare of the Devil, which hath ruined a World of Souls. If one be infected with the Plague or Leprosy, you will avoid him as you value your Life or Health: Now there is no such Plague as Wickedness; it destroys Body and Soul too, and is exceeding infectious; so that if you trust yourself with the Company of such Persons, you run into Temptation and a Snare, and it is great Odds but you will be led Captive thereby. Wherefore, as you tender your own Safety and dread the Displeasure of Almighty God, avoid the Company of wicked Persons, lest you be Partaker of their Sins, and of the Plagues too. And let your Conversation be with those that fear God; these will confirm you in those holy Resolutions you have taken up; these will animate and encourage you to be faithful in them; these will bear you Company

pany towards Heaven, and make your Journey comfortable and easy to you.

3dly, Allow yourself no time to be idle, but be diligent in your lawful Calling, and cheerfully depend upon God for his Blessing, and never doubt of it whilst you are thus found in his Way.

It is commonly observed, that the first Step to Wickedness is Idleness; and indeed there is little Hopes of any one being a good Man, or a good Christian, who has no Care of his Time. 'Tis then that the Devil is most busy with us, when we ourselves are least employed: So that if there were nothing else in the careless Expence of Time, besides the Danger of Temptation, a wise and good Man would be sure to take care to be well employed. But it is a Sin too to be idle; for the Prophet *Ezekiel*, Ch. xvi. 49. tells us, that it was one of the Sins of *Sodom*; and the Author of the Book of *Eccl.* Ch. xxxiii. 27. observes, that it teaches much Evil. And therefore, you must ever account it as an high and crying Offence against Almighty God, who requires that you should improve all your Time to good and useful Purposes, who has intrusted you with it as with a Talent, which if you do not improve, according to his Intent and Design, to his Glory, and the Good of others, He will be sure to require it at your Hands, and bring you to a severe Reckoning for it.

And

14 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

And now, having charged you with the conscientious Observance of these Three Particulars, I shall in a more especial Manner apply myself unto Four sorts of Persons, into whose Hands this little Treatise is likely to fall, *viz.* To the *Youth, Children, Servants, and Poor People.* And here, I beg of every one of you to consider, the several Circumstances wherein you are placed, and to make it your sincere Endeavours to behave yourselves accordingly.

1st, To the Youth: Those of your Age are too apt to indulge themselves in a Neglect of God, and the Concerns of their everlasting Salvation. Ask your own Heart, whether you do not flatter yourself, that you will Repent, and be Good hereafter, when this or that Desire or Lust is satisfied, such or such a Pleasure enjoyed? And have you not so gone on from Day to Day, and that perhaps for a long Time? Oh! Consider, if this be your Case, it is a very bad and dangerous one, and if not speedily amended, is likely to end in great Sorrow and Bitterness; this is a State of Disobedience and Enmity against God, whereby you are become the Subject of his Wrath, Anger and Displeasure; and what wise Man would continue one Minute in such Circumstances? Who would run so great a Hazard of his Soul, which is of more Worth than ten Thousand Worlds? For it is God's infinite Mercy that you are not consumed. But consider farther, you have a

great

great deal of Business to do, even to work out your Salvation, and that must be done by *patient Continuance in well-doing*. God sent you into the World to serve Him, and gives you every Day of your Life for that Purpose: How foolish then is it for you to play away that Candle which was allotted you to work by, and then to think of beginning, when great Part of your Time is spent and gone?

Besides, the Present is the only Time, and the longer you defer, the more listless and unfit you will be; when you have accustomed yourself to Evil, it will grow familiar to you, and you will be as uneasy to part with it, as Men usually are with an old Acquaintance, in whose Company they have long delighted: Nay, the Prophet *Jeremy*, Ch. xiii. 23. says, *It is as easy for the Æthiopian to change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots, as it is for those to do Well, who are accustomed to do Evil*: that is, it is next to an Impossibility.

But what if God should, in his just Judgment, withdraw his Grace from you? What if He should take the Forfeiture, and seal your Condemnation? Consider it! you have provoked Him to do it; He may justly do it; and what Security have you that He will not do it? The Advice He gives every one of us is, *To Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts. This is the accepted Time; This is the Day of Salvation*: And if we let this

16 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

this Day slip, we have Reason to fear the Approach of that Night wherein no Man can work, when the Things belonging to our Peace will be hidden from our Eyes. Surely it is a most dreadful Thing to be forsaken by God, and given over to our own Hearts Lusts, to walk in our own Counsels.

Wherefore, Young Man, *Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth*: and do not make Provision for Shame and Sorrow in thy elder Years: Think not that God will be put off with the Dregs and Refuse of thy Days: Offer it unto thy Governor; Would he accept it? No certainly, he would despise thee and thine Offering; so will God too. Keep Innocency whilst Young, and it will yield thee unspeakable Comfort all thy Life long; and thou wilt lay up a good Foundation also against the Time to come. Behold, Life and Death are set before thee; if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments: Early employ thyself in so doing.

Again, your Age is too subject to the Love of sensual Pleasures: Let me beseech you to have an especial Guard over all your Senses, and avoid all Provocations and Temptations to Lust and Wantonness; such are the Company of unclean Persons, unfavourable Discourses, lascivious Pictures, Books, and Songs, Intemperance in Meat and Drink &c. all which will be apt to add Fuel to your Lusts. Allow not in yourself any unchaste Thoughts, Words, or Actions; but

The Christian's daily Devotion. 17

be serious and sober-minded, humble, modest, pure; Remember, that no unclean Person shall enter into the Kingdom of God.

2dly, *To Children*: Do you be sure to make a Conscience of loving and honouring your Parents; and remember that the Command that enjoins it, is the first Commandment with Promise, and that a grievous Curse is annexed to the Violaters of it: *The Eye that mocketh his Father, and despiseth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it,* Prov. xxx. 17. that is, such a disobedient Child shall die an unnatural, untimely, and ignominious Death; and the too many wretched Examples of publick Justice are sad Instances of this Truth.

3dly, *To Servants*: Let me beseech you, in the Words of the Apostle, *Eph. vi. 5, &c.* *Be obedient unto them that are your Masters according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling, in Singleness of Heart, as unto Christ; not with Eye-service, as Men-pleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart. With good Will doing Service, as to the Lord, and not to Men; knowing, that whatsoever good Thing any Man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Again, 1 Peter ii. 8. Servants, be subject to your Masters with all Fear, not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward. For this is Thank-worthy, if a Man, for Conscience towards God, endure Grief,*

18 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

Grief, suffering wrongfully: For what Glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable unto God, for even hereunto were ye called, &c.

4thly, *To the Poor*: The Povidence of Almighty God has placed you under difficult Circumstances of Life, and daily reads you a Lesson, in a more particular Manner, to depend upon Him. This you may be assured of for your Comfort, that you are under God's constant and immediate Care: And one Advantage you enjoy above the Rich in your Journey to Heaven is, that you are not clogg'd and hindered in your Course thither, by those manifold Encumbrances which lie on them; of whom our Saviour hath said, *That it is very hard for them to enter into the Kingdom Heaven*, Matt. xix. 24. Their Temptations are proportioned to their Abundance; their Cares are more, and their Distractions greater; so that you have no Reason to envy them, nor repine at your own Conditions; and these are chiefly your Temptations, and against these you must be particularly watchful. Certainly, if you consider Things aright, you will find that your Store-house is the most sure, your Supply most certain; for if you are immediately in the Hands of God, of Him who feedeth the Ravens, and cloatheth the Grass in the Field so that you may be much more assured that he will cloath you.

The Christian's daily Devotion. 19

What God requires of you is, That you be diligent and painful, frugal and provident; that you carefully avoid those Sins which your Poverty may tempt you to; as Falshood and Deceit, Murmuring and Repining; that you serve God with a quiet Mind, and live in constant Hopes and Expectation of the heavenly Treasure; that you endeavour to be Humble, Holy, Heavenly-minded, always remembering that he is the poorest Man who is poor in Grace: Your Saviour had not where to lay his Head; let his Example serve to reconcile your low Condition to you; and let your religious Behaviour under it, be the Means to sanctify it.

And now let me advise every one of you how to behave yourselves in the Evening of every Day. And here I beseech you, call yourselves every Night to a strict Account for the Actions of the past Day. Ask yourselves what you have been doing? What Company you have kept? What Temptations you have met with? What Sins you have committed? What Corruptions you have subdued? What Experiences you have had of God's Goodness, and how you entertained them? What Use you have made of his Dealing with yourself or others? In a Word, What Progress you have made Heaven-wards? And ever more account that Day lost, wherein you have not done, or received some Good. Humble yourself before

20 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

fore God, for every neglect of your Duty in the Day past, and be sure to express your Thankfulness to him him for every Opportunity you have met with of doing or receiving Good.

Thus, if you daily sum up your Estate with God, you need not be afraid of a long and uncertain Reckoning; you will constantly see what you have to expect and answer for, and may prepare yourself accordingly.

And when you have so done, you may with much Comfort and Assurance address yourself unto Almighty God, in these, or the like Words.

EVENING PRAYER.

IN an humble Acknowledgment of my manifold Sins and Iniquities, which I, from time to time, and more especially this Day, have committed against Thee, both in Thought, Word, and Deed; I now prostrate myself before Thee, O Lord of Heaven and Earth, beseeching Thee, for the Sake of Jesus Christ, my only Lord and Saviour, to be merciful unto me, and forgive me. Humble me, O Lord, that I have not rendred unto Thee according to thy Mercy and loving Kindness;

that

that I have been forgetful and disobedient, and have sinned against Heaven, and in thy Sight. Let thy Holy Spirit sanctify me throughout, and give me more and more Grace and Strength, whereby I may be enabled to subdue all my sinful and corrupt Affections; and grant that I may approve the Remainder of my Days with all possible Care, and give all Diligence to make my Calling and Election sure, that I may persevere therein unto Death, that so at last I may attain everlasting Life. Enable me by Faith to embrace the Promises and obey the Precepts of the Gospel. Let thy Word be my Rule and Counsellor. Set in my Soul a constant Desire and endeavour to Fear, Serve, and Remember Thee. Give me a gracious Heart, and a good Understanding to keep thy commandments at all Times. Prepare me for every Condition Thou hast designed me; and let every Instance of thy providence engage me to cleave more steadfastly unto Thee, and to glorify thy great Name; and in all Things, let me all look up unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my Faith. Make me more and more sensible of the Vanity, the Shortness

22 *The Christian's daily Devotion.*

Shortness and Uncertainty of this Life, and of the Eternity of the next. Let my great Concern here be, for the Glory of Thee my God, and the Interest of my precious and immortal Soul. And let my Thoughts be much employed on that Day, when God shall judge the Secrets of Men by Jesus Christ. Suffer me not in a short Life to make Way for eternal Misery; but let me make it my constant Business to prepare myself to be happy for ever with Thee.

Enlarge and bless thy holy Catholic Church with more abundant Peace, Purity, and Concord. Pardon the crying Sins of the Nation wherein I live. Give us Grace to search and try our Ways and turn unto Thee our God. Make us a People peculiar to thyself, zealous of good Works. Bless the King, and all that are in Authority under him: Bless the Ministers of thy holy Word and Sacraments; my Parents, Brothers, Sisters, Master, Fellow-Servants, &c. [*as ye stand related*] Reward all my Friends and Benefactors, and forgive all mine Enemies. Be merciful to all afflicted Persons, sanctify their Afflictions unto thee

them, give them Patience under them,
and an happy Issue out of them.

Accept my Praises and Thanksgivings
for all thy Mercies vouchsafed me in this
Life, and for the Hopes of a better. And
now, that I am going to take my Rest
and Sleep; let me consider, that thou,
Lord, only makest me dwell in Safety;
Whether I Sleep or Wake, Live or Die,
let me be found thine own, to thy eter-
nal Glory, and my everlasting Salvation,
through Jesus Christ; in whose blessed
Name and Words, I sum up my imper-
fect Prayers; saying, *Our Father, &c.*

THUS, having waited upon God by so-
lemn Prayer, and committed yourself to his
protection, go to Rest with an holy Confidence
of it, and with a serious Meditation of your
last Hour: Let the Night put you in mind
of the many Days of Darkness; let your Bed
make you mindful of your Grave; and your
Sleep, of your Death; and so compose your
soul, as if you expected not to awake till the
Morning of the Resurrection.

Note,

Note, It is very requisite to Read a Psalm, and a Chapter out of the Old or New Testament, every Morning and Evening, either before or after Prayer, as best suits with your Devotion and Leisure.

A Grace before Meat.

Bless, O Lord, these thy Creatures to our Use, and us in the Use of them to thy Service, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Grace after Meat.

Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, for all thy Mercies, and for this present Refreshment: Grant that in the Strength thereof we may live to set forth thy Honour and Glory, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

